CLAIMS

1.   (Original) A method for a security manager device to manage a plurality of network security devices with a plurality of supervisor devices, each network security device generating network security information related to an associated group of network devices, storing the generated network security information on a primary supervisor device for the network security device when the primary supervisor device is available to store the generated network security information, and storing the generated network security information on an alternate supervisor device when the primary supervisor device is unavailable, the method comprising:

distributing security control information to multiple network security devices, the security control information to be used to generate network security information, by

determining a supervisor device that is the primary supervisor device for each of the multiple network security devices;

sending a single copy of the security control information to the determined supervisor device; and

indicating to the determined supervisor device to send a copy of the security control information to each of the multiple network security devices; and

aggregating the network security information generated by an indicated one of the multiple network security devices using the security control information, by

determining at least one alternate supervisor device that stores at least a portion of the network security information generated by the indicated network security device;

notifying the primary supervisor device for the indicated network security device of a desire for the generated network security information, the notifying including an indication of the determined alternate supervisor devices; and

in response, receiving the generated network security information,

so that the manager device can efficiently distribute information to multiple network security devices, and can retrieve all of the generated network security information for a network security device because alternate supervisor devices will store the information when the primary supervisor device for the network security device is unavailable.

2.   (Original)   The method of claim 1 including generating network security information by, for each network security device:

monitoring network information passing between any network device in the associated group for the network security device and any network device not in the associated group; and

when the monitored network information is of an indicated type,

determining whether the primary supervisor device for the network security device is available to receive information;

when the primary supervisor device is available, sending network security information about the monitored network information to the primary supervisor device for storage; and

when the primary supervisor device is not available, sending network security information about the monitored network information to an alternate supervisor device for storage.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein for each network security device, a security policy for the network security device specifies the indicated types of monitored network information for which to generate network security information and specifies data related to the monitored network information to be included in the generated network security information.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the distributed security control information is software to be executed by the multiple network security devices to control the generation of the network security information.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the distributed security control information is a security policy template that defines the network security information to be generated, and including:

after a copy of the security policy template has been sent to each of the multiple network security devices, configuring each copy of the security policy template with information specific to the network security device to which the security policy template was sent.

6.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein after the notifying of the primary supervisor device, the primary supervisor device sends the generated network security information to the manager device by:

retrieving from each of the determined alternate supervisor devices the network security information generated by the indicated network security device;

retrieving any network security information generated by the indicated network security device that is stored by the primary supervisor device; and

sending the retrieved network security information to the manager device.

7.   (Original) The method of claim 1 including after the receiving of the generated network security information, aggregating the portions of the generated network security information stored by the determined alternate supervisor devices and any portion of the generated network security information stored by the primary supervisor device.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein information is sent between the manager device and the supervisor devices and between the supervisor devices and the

network security devices in a secure form so that others do not have access to contents of the information.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 1 including displaying to a user the plurality of network security devices and the plurality of supervisor devices in such a manner that the primary supervisor device for each of the network security devices is visually indicated, and wherein the distributing of the security control information to the multiple network security devices is in response to selection by the user of the displayed multiple network security devices.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 1 including displaying to a user the plurality of network security devices and the plurality of supervisor devices in such a manner that the primary supervisor device for each of the network security devices is visually indicated, and wherein the aggregating of the network security information generated by an indicated one of the multiple network security devices is in response to a visual indication by the user of the one multiple network security device.

11. – 30. (Cancelled)

31.   (Original)   A method for distributing security policy implementation information to multiple security devices for use in implementing a security policy, the method comprising:

        for each of the security devices, determining a supervisor device currently associated with the security device;

        distributing the security policy implementation information to each of the determined supervisor devices; and

indicating to each of the determined supervisor devices to distribute the security policy implementation information to the security devices with which the supervisor device is associated.

32.   (Original) The method of claim 31 wherein the security policy implementation information is software to be executed by the security devices to control the implementing of the security policy.

33.   (Original) The method of claim 31 wherein the security policy implementation information is a security policy template that indicates the security information to be generated.

34.   (Original) The method of claim 33 including:

after the security policy implementation information has been distributed to each of the security devices, configuring the security policy implementation information distinctly on each security device.

35.   (Original) The method of claim 31 wherein the security policy implementation information is an instruction to be executed by the multiple security devices related to the implementing of the security policy.

36.   (Original) The method of claim 31 wherein the security policy implementation information is information common to the multiple security devices, and wherein for each of the multiple security devices the common information is for configuring a security policy template for the security device with information specific to the security device.

37.   (Original) The method of claim 31 wherein before the security policy implementation information is distributed to each of the multiple security devices, at least some of the multiple security devices have existing security policy implementation

information of a similar type, and wherein for those security devices the security policy implementation information to be distributed will replace the existing security policy implementation information.

38.   (Original)   The method of claim 31 wherein before the security policy implementation information is distributed to each of the multiple security devices, at least some of the multiple security devices have existing security policy implementation information of a similar type, and wherein for those security devices the security policy implementation information to be distributed will supplement the existing security policy implementation information.

39.   (Original)   The method of claim 31 wherein the distributing of the security policy implementation information to each of the determined supervisor devices is performed in a manner such that the security policy implementation information is not accessible to other devices.

40.   (Original)   The method of claim 31 including displaying to a user a view of the multiple security devices and the supervisor devices currently associated with the security devices, and wherein the distributing of the security policy implementation information is in response to a visual selection by the user.

41. – 49. (Canceled)

50.   (Original)   A method for distributing control information to multiple security devices for use in controlling the operation of the multiple security devices, the method comprising:

for each of the security devices, determining a supervisor device currently associated with the security device;

distributing the control information to each of the determined supervisor devices; and

indicating to each of the determined supervisor devices to distribute the control information to the security devices with which the supervisor device is associated.

51. (Original) The method of claim 50 wherein after the control information is distributed to the security devices, the security devices operate in accordance with the control information.

52. – 81. (Cancelled)

82. (Original) A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a manager device to distribute security policy implementation information to multiple security devices for use in implementing a security policy, by:

for each of the security devices, determining a supervisor device currently associated with the security device;

distributing the security policy implementation information to each of the determined supervisor devices; and

indicating to each of the determined supervisor devices to distribute the security policy implementation information to the security devices with which the supervisor device is associated.

83. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 82 wherein the security policy implementation information is software to be executed by the security devices to control the implementing of the security policy.

84. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 82 wherein the security policy implementation information is a security policy template that indicates the security information to be generated.

85.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 84 wherein the contents further cause the manager device to, after the security policy implementation information has been distributed to each of the security devices, configure the security policy implementation information distinctly on each security device.

86.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 82 wherein the security policy implementation information is an instruction to be executed by the multiple security devices related to the implementing of the security policy.

87.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 82 wherein the contents further cause the manager device to display to a user a view of the multiple security devices and the supervisor devices currently associated with the security devices, and wherein the distributing of the security policy implementation information is in response to a visual selection by the user.

88. – 105. (Cancelled)